

# *Research on the Performance and Application of Watercolor Painting in Illustration Art*

**Guo Xin**

*Huanghe Jiaotong University, Jiaozuo, China*

**Keywords:** Watercolor painting; illustration art; performance and application

**Abstract:** With the rapid development of China's comprehensive national strength, economic level and cultural science and technology, people are more and more in pursuit of spiritual enjoyment, illustration art as a vigorous development of visual art communication form, has been strongly concerned and widely loved by the public, is widely used in all fields of society. At the beginning, illustrations usually exist as text accessories, but now they gradually occupy the dominant position, and pay more emphasis on artistry and uniqueness. The continuous development of flower arrangement art has gradually enhanced its cultural value and commercial value. As a traditional Chinese art form, watercolor painting can make the art of illustration more charming.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the rapid development of science and technology, cultural diversity and interactive characteristics have become more and more obvious. Under the background of the continuous collision of multiple cultures, the reform and innovation of illustration art are ready to go, which has become a common concern and key research issue of the majority of artists. With the advance of The Times, the dependence of illustration relative to literary carriers has gradually weakened, and it has become an independent form. In addition, social networks and traditional media are constantly getting close to new media, which provides new opportunities and channels for the development of illustration art. Watercolor painting is a category with a complete language system in traditional painting. In the long history, there are countless links between watercolor painting and illustration. Applied watercolor painting to the art of flower arrangement has a positive influence and important significance for artistic expression and cultural value.

## **1. Overview of the illustration art**

"Illustration" roughly means "illuminating things to make them clear, clear and visible". In Cihai, the illustration is defined as: pictures inserted in books and periodicals, some printed in the middle of the text, and some in the form of inserts, which play a supplementary explanation or artistic appreciation to the content of the text. With the continuous development of modern society, people's understanding of illustration is gradually comprehensive and profound, and the application is gradually from books, magazines to advertising, television, high-precision technology, literature, etc. Today's illustration can be designed, or it can be a painting. Painting is complementary and inseparable, you can see the illustration of various painting techniques, and at the same time, it is

combined with modern design. With the gradual expansion of the application scope of illustration, most of the time, there is no need to be attached to words, and the independent initiative is getting stronger and stronger. Illustration can express the abstract text language information through the visual image language, so that the information transmission is more intuitive and concrete. More and more creators begin to use illustrations to express their personal feelings, record and describe what they have seen and heard, and reflect the comprehensive characteristics of illustrations.

Chinese illustration art has a long history of development. At the beginning, it was presented in the way of folk New Year pictures to express folklore or myths. Although it has not formed a systematic scale, it can be regarded as the starting point of Chinese illustration art, which has strong Chinese folk characteristics. At the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, the appearance of "month brand" symbolized the publication of Chinese commercial illustration. The upsurge of book creation in the Republic of China brought new opportunities to the development of illustration art. Since the 1980s, under the influence of policies, international exchanges and other factors, illustration art has more personal style, cultural connotation and artistic taste.

Illustration as an important form of visual communication, graphics itself can carry a lot of information, has the common characteristics of other visual language, in contrast, illustration also has obvious information exchange function, to graphics, images as the carrier, vividly express the author wants to convey information, has the characteristics of directness, interesting, is much better than the simple text effect. The illustration art has a strong visual image value, is a suitable carrier of information exchange, and occupies a relatively important position in both the society and the individual. In the continuous development of The Times, illustration has gradually formed a lively situation of different styles, which has commercial value and enhances the artistic value, and the two influence and support each other.

## **2. Analysis of the applied characteristics of watercolor painting expression forms in the illustration art**

Modern society has entered the era of picture reading. People are more sensitive to images and pictures, which are more attractive to words. As an important form of visual communication in modern times, illustration is widely used in all aspects of society and people's life, and occupies its position in the society is significantly enhanced. Watercolor painting also plays an important role in the field of art in China, and many artists and artists have special feelings for watercolor painting. The integration of watercolor painting and illustration art can make "beauty" stronger, and play a significance of supplement and in-depth exploration. Illustration has never been a new member of art, it has a development history of thousands of years, and watercolor also occupies an important position in the art field of China. It is not only the picture presented by simple techniques, but also gradually integrates the feelings of various ethnic groups and cultures in the development, containing profound values and artistic connotation. With watercolor as the medium, the continuous exploration can make the art works more flexible and appealing, and play an important and positive role in the development and reform of the art field and the national economy<sup>[1]</sup>.

### **2.1 The significance of watercolor painting in the art of illustration**

#### **2.1.1 Watercolor painting can be used as the basis of illustration modeling**

Watercolor painting has a relatively mature theoretical system in China. In the development history of thousands of years, many methods and skills have been summed up with lots of experience. People who have learned watercolor painting can improve their modeling ability and the ability to master color more accurately when creating illustrations. The unique style and artistic

charm of watercolor painting can provide a steady stream of inspiration for the design of illustration art, and generate new sparks in the collision of thinking. Mastering the basic techniques and aesthetic rules of watercolor painting is the basic guarantee for creating illustration. Integrate multiple meanings into the illustration art works to reflect the respect and understanding of illustration.

### **2.1.2 Watercolor painting provides a variety of possibilities for illustration performance**

Watercolor can make the expression of illustration art more close to the essence, in improving its commercial value at the same time do not ignore its cultural value, because the watercolor has strong expression, with its fresh and transparent characteristics to attract attention, give a person to create a good visual experience, on the basis of clear expression intention and emotion, is the organic integration of art and language, build a bridge of communication between the author and the audience. The convenience of painting tools, the uniqueness of color language, the richness of watercolor painting techniques, the diversity of emotional expression, each can integrate more connotation into the art of illustration, is the specific direction that needs to be constantly optimized and improved.

## **2.2 The embodiment of the artistic personality of watercolor painting in the illustration**

The performance of watercolor painting in the art of illustration is shown at many levels, among which the artistic personality is the relatively basic content. Through the reasonable and flexible use of watercolor painting in the art of illustration, it can fully reflect the unique advantages of watercolor painting. Watercolor does not have high basic requirements for learners, most people can easily learn in a short time, so that people can keep interest in watercolor from the very beginning. In addition, watercolor painting has the characteristics of convenience, flexibility, low cost and so on, in practical feasibility, only a piece of paper, a color box, a few pens, a glass of water can complete a watercolor painting, and then its simple artistic creation can exist as an illustration. Compared with other types of painting, watercolor painting has a natural advantage of many types of painting, including CG in the era of science and technology, which is not as convenient as watercolor painting. Whether comparing watercolor with modern CG illustration or traditional painting, watercolor painting has its unique advantages and characteristics. The language and form expressed by watercolor painting are applied to illustration art, which is conducive to inheriting the traditional cultural form of watercolor painting from the perspective of art integration. It can also create new opportunities for the development of flower arrangement art and constantly expand its development path<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **3. The specific application of watercolor painting in the illustration art**

### **3.1 Chinese watercolor illustration**

Zheng Mantuo was the most representative painter in the early 20th century. After the May 4th Movement, female students became the symbol of new women. Zheng Mantuo's monthly card paintings set off a boom in the society at that time, reflecting the beautiful scenery with female students. Female students in the picture below holding a book, sitting on the railing as if thinking about what, background with the peach blossom and swallow let a person can't help but think of "die of peach, its leaf stand", the whole picture gives a person with the sense of pure, sunshine, let viewers have relaxed and happy feeling, combined with the time of the time background, show the female students heroic patriotism. Under the influence of Zheng Mantuo, Hang Ying also began to

create watercolor illustrations, and in 1920, set up "One Studio", the earliest modern advertising agency in China, with representative works such as "Beautiful brand cigarettes" and "Double Sisters Brand Toilet Water" [3], as shown in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1: Zheng Mantuo's "Month card" works



Figure 2: Hang a aying "month brand" works

The contemporary watercolor painter Guan Weixing is also one of the representative figures, creating important value for the application and development of watercolor painting in the art of flower arrangement. The illustration in Lin Haiyin's "Old Stories of the City" is written by Guan Weixing, which adds a lot of luster to the book and makes the plot and characters more deeply rooted in the people. Guan Weixing's watercolor illustrations pay more attention to humanistic feelings, technical skills and artistic attainments, which bring out the best with the words and were widely praised by the social crowd at that time. Mr.Guan Weixing carefully designed and rigorously studied every vessel, object, costumes and architecture in the South of the City, so as to ensure the

effective coordination between illustrations and text and present the ideal effect<sup>[4]</sup>, just as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: The illustration of "The South of the City"

Pan Liping, under her pen name A Dou, is one of the "top ten new female cartoonists" in China, which opens a new trend of watercolor illustration in China, expresses in the form of cartoons, and shows new style characteristics from the aspects of story background, character setting and color collocation. The picture album "Bu Bird" laid its position in the field of illustration art. Not only that, pan liping also very confident about his works, expand a lot of peripheral products, including pillow, scarves, mobile phone case, clothing, etc., through WeChat, taobao channels for customization and sales, let a lot of people with the same aesthetic both feel the beauty of art, also harvest their favorite items. Pan Liping raised the application form of watercolor painting in the art of illustration to a new height, and developed the commercial value of watercolor illustration, so that watercolor illustration not only exists as art, but also becomes an important force to promote the development of national economic development.

### 3.2 European and American watercolor illustrations



Figure 4: Alice Sleepwalking Mirror

Europe is the birthplace of western civilization, and its cultural inheritance and development are at the forefront in the world. As an important part of the cultural system, art presents different characteristics and trends in each stage of historical development. The reason why the watercolor illustration of Europe and the United States is not only because it is a habitual name, but also

because the watercolor illustration style and content of the two are more obvious, and the research effect of putting them together is more ideal.

European illustration art in the 17th century, in the Victoria period British watercolor painting into its heyday, many people will call Britain the birthplace of watercolor, the land breeds a lot of excellent watercolor masters, such as Paul sandby, Thomas gilding, Joseph merrod, William, etc., for the European illustration art change and development contributed the important force<sup>[5]</sup>.

Arthur Rackham Recognized as the outstanding illustrators, "Alice in Wonderland" is a classic work, which is not only applied to illustration art as watercolor painting, but also gradually adapted into animation video and film and television works, with great artistic value and commercial value. This illustration is close to perfect in the use of color and text expression, both complement each other, the effect is remarkable, just as shown in Figure 4.

Henriette Willbeek Le Mair Is an illustrator from the Netherlands, published many fairy tale water painting books, his illustrations with rich materials and innocence, very suitable for children to watch. Among them, the clever shape can always attract the attention of the majority of children, and it will also be printed on children's tableware, schoolbags, stationery and other items, to add a lot of vitality and vitality to children's study and life, won a high popularity. Not only that, she also opened a painting class, which is surrounded by children all her life. This innocent and simple life makes her illustration creation more vivid and natural, warm and pleasant without losing her artistic taste.

The most famous watercolor illustration work in the United States is Disney, which unites the immigrant culture from all over the world, closely combines watercolor illustration with the animation industry, and opened many famous animation companies, making the commercial value of illustration works reach the peak. Many of Disney's early works were created on the basis of watercolor painting. In 1932, it created the world's first full-color cartoon animation, Flower and Tree, in 1937, the first animated film, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and in 1942, the second animated feature film, "Pinocchio"..... Its original shape is presented in watercolor painting technology. Later, with the improvement of ability and the development of technology, hand-drawn cartoons became the pride of Disney. For example, The Lion King became a popular work, which opened up a new situation for the application of watercolor painting in the art of illustration, just as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Pinocchio, Flowers and Trees

### 3.3 Japanese and Korean watercolor illustration

Japanese and South Korean watercolor illustrations were the first to form a complete industrial chain, and they showed mature characteristics in artistic style, expression techniques, language system and other aspects, which left a profound impact on people all over the world. As soon as people see the relevant watercolor illustration, they can judge whether the work is from Japan and South Korea, indicating that Japanese and South Korean watercolor illustrations have formed artistic characteristics and creative styles that can be remembered.

When it comes to Japanese animation, even people who do not know much about it will almost think of Miyazaki's works at the first time, "My Neighbor Totoro" and "Spirited Away" are Miyazaki's classic animation. Kazuo Ono is Miyazaki Hayao's personal illustrator, they are good at integrating characters into the landscape, giving people a fresh feeling, and delicate style, colorful is Kazuo Ono's creation characteristics. In 2009, he published a water painting book, Akita, Sightseeing Scenery, which incorporates the beautiful and unique landscapes of the 1960s to provide viewers with a good visual experience. This picture book appropriately integrates some characters into the landscape. The whole tone is based on the landscape and supplemented by the characters. The fine scenery is presented by the subtle movements of the characters, which gives people a feeling of relaxation and happiness, as shown in Figure 6.

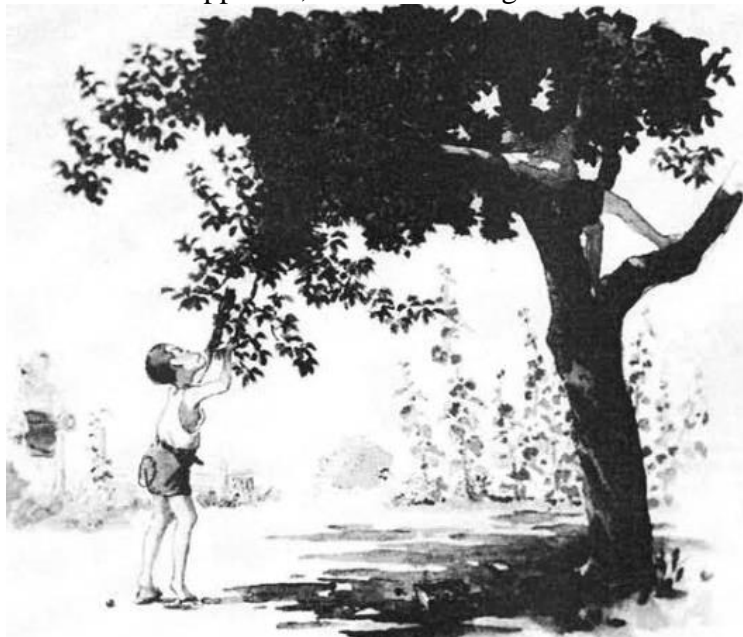


Figure 6: Illustration of Akita

Lee Misook She is a Korean watercolor illustrator, who is good at showing the fresh breath and sad feelings of adolescent girls in the form of watercolor painting. He is deeply loved by young men and women. In her watercolor illustration, she can see the inner feelings of each girl, giving people the feeling of being understood and concerned. Her works infiltrate the hearts of the viewer in a silent way, closely combining sorrow with splendor. Lee Misook Good at expressing the different emotions of the girl in the form of contrast, the following two pictures, just simply change the rain into colorful scattered flowers, can let the girl's emotion from sorrow into joy, the artistic charm and creative ideas have to be amazing, just as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Lee Misook Watercolor illustration works

#### 4. Conclusion

To sum up, illustration is one of the most direct art forms of visual communication. It has gone through thousands of years of historical development and transformation, and has derived many excellent works, realizing the goal of integrating cultural value and commercial value. In this paper for watercolor performance and application in illustration art, from Chinese watercolor illustration, European and American watercolor illustration, Japan and South Korea watercolor illustration different angles analysis, profound interpretation of the watercolor painting in the form of illustration art, application advantages and specific form, for the future development of watercolor illustration can play a certain role in promoting. In the future, we should continue to carry out continuous exploration based on the historical origin of watercolor painting, and constantly explore the unique application value of watercolor painting in the illustration art.

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